

Message Text

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17

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 SAM-01 EB-07 ACDA-05 /098 W
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R 230900Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4122

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

UDKMDQ/AMEMBASSY MADRID 161

AMEMBAZIY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L NOUAKCHOTT 1479

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, SS, MR, MO, GA, SP

SUBJECT: SAHARA WATCH: MAURITANIAN-MOROCCAN RELATIONS

REF: NOUAKCHOTT 1435 (NOTAL); RABAT 3412 (NOTAL)

1. FOR NEARLY TWO MONTHS, OFFICIALS OF BOTH MAURITANIA AND MOROCCO HAVE BEEN ASSERTING PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY THAT THERE IS "TOTAL SOLIDARITY" BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES ON SPANISH SAHARA, THAT TWO CHIEFS OF STATE ARE "IN COMPLETE AGREEMENT ON FUTURE OF THAT REGION", AND THAT TWO GOVERNMENTS HAVE "COMMON POLICY" ON DECOLONIZATION OF SAHARA "WHICH IS AT ONCE MAURITANIAN AND MOROCCAN". MOST RECENT AND AUTHORITATIVE PUBLIC STATEMENTS OF THIS PERFECT ALIGNMENT OF POSITION AND OBJECTIVE WERE MADE BY MAURITANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER OULD MOUKNASS AND MOROCCAN FOREIGN MINISTER LARAKI ON JULY 15 AND 16 IN NOUAKCHOTT, MARAKESH, AND CASABLANCA.

2. BUT PROTESTATIONS OZVIRTUECJNO MATTER HOW FREQUENTLY RBMA
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PEATED DO NOT ALTER REALITY. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MAURITANIA

AND MOROCCO IS FAR FROM ONE OF "TOTAL SOLIDARITY" IN GENERAL AND ON SAHARA IN PARTICULAR. (INDEED MOUKNASS, IN ASSERTING PRESENT UNITY OF VIEW, ADMITTED MAURITANIA AND MOROCCO HAD DISAGREED VIGOROUSLY OVER SAHARA UNTIL VERY RECENTLY.) PERSISTENCE OF VAGUE GENERALITIES ON SAHARA PARTITION SUGGESTS STRONGLY THAT GIRM'S INSISTENCE THAT "MAURITANIA EXTENDS AT LEAST AS FAR NORTH AS EL-AAIOUN" AND MOROCCO'S CLAIMS TO WHOLE OF SPANISH SAHARA HAVENOT YET BEEN SYSTEMATICALLY SORTED OUT AND REDUCED TO A SINGLE LINE ON A MAP. ON BROADER SCALE, OVERALL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES IS MORE ACCURATELY AND REALISTICALLY DESCRIBED BY SUCH WORDS AS "DISDAIN" AND "SUSPICION" THAN BY "SOLIDARITY" AND "COMPLETE AGREEMENT". AS NATIONS AND AS INDIVIDUALS, MAURITANIANS AND MOROCCANS ARE WIDELY SEPARATED IN AGE, EDUCATION, AND SOPHISTICATION. FEW MOROCCANS (INCLUDING GOM OFFICIALS) ARE ABLE TO HIDE THEIR SELF-CONFIDENT BELIEF IN THEIR INTELLECTUAL, POLITICAL, AND MANAGERIAL SUPERIORITY WHEN DEALING WITH MAURITANIANS. VIRTUALLY ALL MAURITANIANS, UNDERSTANDABLY ENOUGH, RESENT FREQUENTLY OFFICIAL AND NEARLY ALWAYS CONDESCENDING BEHAVIOR OF THEIR MOROCCAN "BROTHERS". GIRM OFFICIALS, HOWEVER, MAKE DETERMINED (AND LARGELY SUCCESSFUL) EFFORT TO IGNORE MOROCCAN JIBES, RECOGNIZING PHYSICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE WEAKNESS OF THEIR COUNTRY AND CRITICAL IMPORTANCE OF WORKING WITH MOROCCO TO ACHIEVE MAURITANIA'S OVERARCHING POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC OBJECTIVES IN NORTHWEST AFRICA AND ARAB WORLD.

3. MAURITANIANS HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN MOROCCO'S TEN YEAR REFUSAL TO RECOGNIZE MAURITANIAN INDEPENDENCE AND THEN ONLY GRUDGINGLY. MOREOVER, PERSISTENT MOROCCAN EFFORTS DURING 1960S TO UNDERMINE MAURITANIAN STATE BY POLITICAL AND FINANCIAL ENCOURAGEMENT OF (MOSTLY OPPORTUNISTIC) IRREDENTIST DISSIDENTS, LEFT MAURITANIANS DEEPLY GRATEFUL THEY DID NOT SHARE COMMON FRONTIER WITH THEIR PRINCIPAL ANTAGONIST, A FEELING WHICH PERSISTS TO THIS DAY DESPITE THE FORMAL FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION TREATY OF 1970. MAURITANIANS BOTH IN AND OUT OF GOVERNMENT REMAIN SUSPICIOUS AND EVER-WATCHFUL OF THEIR OLDER AND MORE SOPHISTICATED "BROTHER" TO THE NORTH. ALL ARE PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE ABOUT PERIODIC REVIVAL BY MOROCCANS OF CHERIFIAN CLAIM TO ALL OF MAURITANIA. FOR THIS REASON, MATTER-OF-CONFIDENTIAL

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FACT ASSERTIONS BY MOROCCAN OFFICIALS THAT "ALL THIS REAL ESTATE IS REALLY MOROCCO" (MOROCCAN AMBASSADOR MAHIOUT TO AMBASSADOR JULY 14); EDITORIAL REITERATION IN SEMI-OFFICIAL MOROCCAN NEWSPAPER (JULY 15) OF FORMALLY RENOUNCED MOROCCAN CLAIM TO ALL OF WESTERN DESERT DOWN TO NORTH BANK OF SENEGAL RIVER; OR ILL-CONCEALED EFFORTS TO ENCOURAGE REVIVAL OF DISSIDENCE AMONG PRO-MOROCCAN TRIBES IN NORTHERN MAURITANIA (CURRENTLY CIRCULATING STORY ASSERTS PRESIDENT OULD DADDAD PERSONALLY

REQUESTED KING HASSAN EARLY THIS YEAR TO RECALL FORMER AMBASS-DOR EEMLALI FOR ENGAGING IN PRECISELY SUCH ACTIVITY); DO LITTLE TO ALLAY MAURITANIAN SUSPICIONS ANYICONTRIBUTE EVEN LESS TO BUILDING SOLID RELATIONSHIP OF EQUALS.

4. SIMILARLY, MOROCCAN ASSERTIONS THAT MAURITANIA IS JOHNNY-COME-LATELY TO SAHARA DECOLONIZATION CAMPAIGN AND THAT GIRM COULD NOT WPIRE TO ANY PIECE OF RIO DE ORO OR SAKIET AL HAMRA EXCEPT FOR THE PERSPICACITY AND GRACIOUS GENEROSITY OF RABAT SIMPLY DO NOT RPT NOT SQUARE WITH HISTORICAL FACTS. IN DECLARING MAURITANIA HAD NEVER THOUGHT OF SAHARA UNTIL MOGBCCOMRNI ZEZZ SAHARA LIBERATION EFFORT IN UNITED NATIONS IN 1966 AND THAT MAURITANIA THEN ONLY JOINED IN THE ACCELERATING CAMPAIGN A YEAR LATER, AMBASSADOR MAHJOUBI WAS CLEARLY IGNORANT OF JULY 1957 SPEECH IN ATAR OF NOW PRESIDENT THEN GOVERNMENT COUNCIL VICE CHAIRMAN MOKTAR OULD DADDAAH IN WHICH HE EXPLICITLY NAMED SPANISH SAHARA AS PART OF "GREATER MAURITANIA" HE ENVISAGED, AND CALLED PARTICULARLY ON "OUR BROTHERS IN THE SPANISH SAHARA" TO PARTICIPATE IN THE BUILDING OF THE FREE AND INDEPENDENT MAURITANIA OF TOMORROW. (WHILE GIRM HAS EVOKE ATAR SPEECH ON RECENT OCCASIONS, IT HAS DONE SO ONLY WITH UTMOST DISCRETION ... AND SUSPENSION POINTS *.. SINCE OULD DADDAAH NOTED THAT "MOORISH" POPULATION EXTENDS INTO "CONFINES OF SOUTHERN MOROCCO", AND EXPLICITLY DESCRIBED GREATER MAURITANIA AS EXTENDING NORTHWARD "TO DRAA" --A WADI IN MOROCCO WHICH LIES SOME 240 KILOMETERS UP COAST FROM PRESENT SAHARA BORDER.)

5. ALL OF WHICH SUGGESTS (A) THAT "TOTAL SOLIDARITY" OF NEWLY-RECONCILED "BROTHERS" IS GOING TO RUN INTO SOME VERY ROCKY STRETCHES ALONG DESERT TRACK TO A LIBERATED SAHARA AND TO THE COMMON MAURITANIAN-MOROCCAN FRONTIER WHICH PARTITION WILL UNAVOIDABLY BRING, AND (B) THAT USG SHOULD KEEP WELL OUT OF INEVITABLE SIBLING SQUABBLES, TAKING GREAT CARE IN PROCESS

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NEITHER TO FAVOR, SIDE WITH, OR RELY ON ONE OR THE OTHER TO ACCOMPLISH ITS OWN OBJECTIVES. HANDYSIDE

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